

REMARKS

An Office Action was mailed on October 1, 2004. Claims 1 – 22 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18 and 20 are amended. No new matter is added. Support for the amendments may be found with reference to Applicants' FIG. 4 and page 7, line 26 – page 8, line 18 of Applicants' specification.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 – 5 and 8 – 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,710,591 to Bruno et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,977,449 to Morgan and U.S. Patent No. 5,734,923 to Sagawa. Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bruno in view of Morgan, Sagawa and U.S. Patent No. 5,541,640 to Larson. Applicants amend claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18 and 20 to further clarify the nature of their invention, and respectfully traverse this rejection.

In amended independent claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 20, Applicants disclose a video telecommunication system including a plurality of video transmission apparatuses each equipped with a camera, a video reception apparatus with a monitor and positioned in a single supervisory center, and a network interconnecting the plurality of video transmission apparatuses and the video reception apparatus. A video information describing unit simultaneously sends both a switch command specifying one of the cameras associated with the plurality of video transmission apparatuses and character information in accordance with the switch command for display by the monitor of the video reception apparatus, where the character information describes the video information of the camera. As indicated in amended claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and

20, these claimed features are enabled by a title management table of the video information describing unit that stores titles representing video information given by the plurality of cameras (see, e.g., Applicants' FIG. 4).

In our Response of August 12, 2003, Applicants made the following arguments to distinguish the present invention over the cited references:

Bruno discloses a method and apparatus for recording and indexing an audio and multimedia conference. The apparatus of Bruno includes a plurality of workstations each including a monitor 14 and camera 20, a multipoint control unit (MCU) 26 for multipoint broadcasting of a video signal associated with a detected audio signal, and means for generating and recording a generated location signal together with the detected audio signal.

Unlike Applicants' claimed video telecommunication system, the system of Bruno is not configured to provide a plurality of video transmission apparatuses each having a camera for providing video information to a video reception apparatus placed in a single supervisory center. Moreover, unlike Applicants' claimed video telecommunication system, the system of Bruno does not include Applicants' video information describing unit 16 that simultaneously sends a switch command to a video transmission apparatus and sends character information to a monitor in the single supervisory center to describe the video information of the switched camera. Although, for example, Bruno discloses that MCU 26 is capable of directing video and text information transmitted by a workstation 12, Bruno does not suggest or disclose that MCU 26 is able to simultaneously direct a switch command to a video transmission apparatus controlling a camera while sending character information descriptive of the switched camera to the monitor in the single supervisory center. This feature of Applicants' claimed invention is also neither suggested nor disclosed by Larson.

In our Response of July 29, 2004, Applicants made the following additional arguments:

In the present Office Action [of November 5, 2003], the Examiner acknowledges that Bruno fails to disclose "providing a plurality of video transmission apparatuses each having a camera for providing information to a video reception apparatus placed in a single supervisory center ...". The Examiner, however, suggests that such a configuration is taught by Morgan (see, e.g., FIG. 3 of Morgan).

In Fig. 3, Morgan discloses a system 50 including a plurality of remote video cameras 52 coupled by broadband facilities to a frequency agile demodulator 58 at a central location, which is further coupled to one or more monitors 60. The demodulator 58 is configured so that any video camera channel can be selected from among a plurality of remote video cameras 52. The selection may be made manually, or by optional processor control 64 (see, e.g., column 3, lines 48 – 64 of Morgan).

However, unlike Applicants' claimed invention, neither Bruno nor Morgan disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed video information describing unit 16 of Fig. 1 for "sending both a switch command for specifying one of the plurality of cameras to the plurality of video transmission apparatuses and character information describing video information from the specified camera simultaneously, so as to make the monitor display the video information combined with the character information" (see, e.g., amended claim 1 and page 5, line 34 - page 6, line 5 of Applicants' specification). For example, Morgan fails to disclose or otherwise suggest that modulator 58 of FIG. 3 of Morgan is capable of simultaneously directing a switch command to a video transmission apparatus controlling a camera and specifying character information descriptive of the switched camera to the monitor in the single supervisory center.

In the present Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Bruno and Morgan fail to disclose Applicants' monitor display, simultaneously combining video and character information. The Examiner suggests, however, that such a feature is disclosed by Sagawa. Sagawa discloses an apparatus for outputting guide information as a combination of image, text, voice and sign language (see, e.g., FIG. 47 and column 20, line 59 through column 21, line 26 of Sagawa). A guide information editing unit assembles the guide information for storage in a guide information memory unit, from which it is transferred to a displaying section by an information transfer device (see, e.g., FIG. 48). The assembled information is synchronized according to a time schedule (see, e.g., column 19, lines 61 to 63 of Sagawa).

Unlike Applicants' claimed invention, however, the combination of Bruno, Morgan and Sagawa still fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed video

information describing unit that simultaneously sends over the network both a switch command for a selecting a one of a plurality of cameras and character information associated with the selected camera. in accordance with the switch command to the display.

Instead of synchronizing information in time as is taught by Sagawa, Applicants' claimed video information describing unit synchronizes character information with a camera to represent the scene that is captured by the camera. For example, as shown in the title management table of FIG.4, character information is associated with both a camera and a selected viewing angle. As described for example in Applicants' specification at page 2, lines 11 – 31, Applicants' claimed video information describing unit provides the advantages of enabling a more efficient management and updating of character information in a centralized unit, and relieving the individual video transmission apparatuses from having to send character information together with the image data provided by the associated cameras.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that their invention as claimed in amended independent claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 20 is not made obvious by the combination of Bruno, Morgan and Sagawa, and that amended independent claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 20 are therefore allowable. As claims 2, 3, 5 – 7, 10, 12 – 14, 16, 19, 21 and 22 each depend from one of allowable claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 20, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 3, 5 – 7, 10, 12 – 14, 16, 19, 21 and 22 are also allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that 1 – 22, which include independent claims 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 20, and the claims that depend therefrom, stand in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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